

Approaches to Semiotics
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the fool can think "there is no God" (*Psalms*; XIII,1), anybody can say "there is no God." Thus, *De Veritate*, having developed a theory of the *proposition (*enunciatio*), contrasts the propositional truth (truth and/or "rectitude") with the referential truth. In order to reach referential truth, the proposition must add to its consistency another property, which is its right (*rectus*) finality: to assert existence, being, to deny what is not. Any *utterance, even well formed, that is to say, even possessing a "truth of signification," must add to it an ontological "rectitude," which is the actual truth. These positions lead Anselm to an analysis of the properties of *language. The internal truth of any well-formed utterance, which allows falsity and deceit, is nothing else than the semantic consistency, the internal laws governing the use of *signs in language. The "truth of signification" would be called *semanticity* today. Anselm is one of the first thinkers to consider *semantics at the *sentence level (*Satzsemantik*).

The second point that deals with semiotics in Anselm's writings is the theory of God's language, which is to be compared with *Plato's *Logos* and with *Augustine's *Verbum*. Here, God's speech, contrary to man's speech, is consubstantial with Nature: it is an exact image of the nature of things. God's "words" are in fact iconic signs of reality. On the contrary, the man's words, which are used by him "in order to think the things," are imperfect images of these things (*Monologium*, 31).

Coming back to the first point, it might be illuminating to analyze the *De Veritate* from the modern logical point of view of the semantic functionality of language, considered as an enlargement of the concept of truth (see, for example, *Austin's theories). A.R.

Anthropology

The significance of semiotic inquiry to anthropology differs according to the definition and conception of anthropology held by different anthropologists. In the definition characteristic of the modern history of anthropology in America, "The Science of Man," semiotics is generally relegated to a minor role as a branch of one of the four subfields of anthropology, linguistics. The other branches of anthropology, physical anthropology, cultural anthropology, and archeology leave little place in their self-conceptions for semiotic inquiry. The scholars who represent exceptions to the generalization, Sapir (1934) and Hallowell (1955), were influential in anthropology in spite of, rather than because of, their semiotic interests. Sapir formulated a semiotic conception of symbolic behavior and Hallowell's interest in concepts of self brought the Mead-Dewey tradition of American Pragmatism into his anthropological concerns. Bateson's 1936 monograph, *Naven*, was an early example of an anthropologist largely concerned with *communication processes in relationship to social and cultural forms in other societies. This work attracted little attention and Bateson left anthropology to do work in psychiatry, systems theory and other disciplines that influenced the development of semiotics greatly. Only recently has his interest in paradoxes of communication and metacommunicative devices reemerged in anthropology (Turner 1975b). Until recently semioticians such as *Peirce have been little referred to by anthropologists; the primary exceptions being Singer's interest in "signs of the self" (1980) and Firth's general survey of anthropological theories of *symbols (1973). The absence of a systematic

semiotic focus has resulted in a proliferation of common terms defined differently and the semiotically sophisticated reader must beware of assuming that when anthropologists use the term *symbol*, for example, they are defining it in the Peircean tradition. Usually, *symbol* is a general term used to refer to all varieties of sign behavior. The valuable semiotic distinction between *index, *icon and symbol, for example, is not often used in what is now called *symbolic anthropology*, the field of social and cultural anthropology most closely allied with semiotics.

Within the traditional conception of anthropology as a comprehensive "science of man" in all his capacities, signs have tended to be studied as an aspect of *language, and specifically semiotic research was conducted primarily in the field of anthropological linguistics. As this conception of the unity of anthropological practice became more unwieldy and unworkable in the 1950s and 1960s it has been replaced by a number of specialisms that have made claims to study different human capacities constituted as the object of anthropological inquiry. Radcliffe-Brown's quest for a comparative sociology in England developed into a number of branches. The study of jural and political relationships in comparative perspective were exemplified in the work of Fortes (1969b). Under the influence of Evans-Pritchard at Oxford, social anthropology came increasingly to shift its focus "from *function to *meaning" (Evans-Pritchard 1951; Ardener 1971). In America and France, at the same time, linguistic models came to dominate anthropological research through the influence of *structuralism as represented by Lévi-Strauss' adaptation of *Saussure's version of "semiology" (Lévi-Strauss 1963a, 1976a) and the American school of *ethnoscience, which applied the models of language structure developed by Boas and his students to the study of nonlinguistic behavior (Goodenough 1981). More recently the critical reception of these trends and the publication of a number of semiotically sophisticated studies of other societies has led to a conception of social and cultural anthropology that is more directly related to semiotics. (See especially Geertz 1973; Crick 1976; see also Evans-Pritchard 1956; Lienhardt 1963; Turner 1967, 1969, 1975b; and the volumes edited by Geertz in the series *Studies in Cultural Anthropology* for Cambridge University Press).

Variouly called *symbolic anthropology*, *semantic anthropology* or even *semiotic ethnography*, all of these approaches share the recognition that the study of other *cultures and societies involves the analysis of sign systems in terms of which the members of those other societies communicate with each other and interpret their experience. There are two competing trends in the study of other societies from a semiotic point of view. One viewpoint is most often referred to as *symbolic anthropology* and is primarily associated with Schneider and his students at the University of Chicago. It takes the position that anthropology is the science that studies "culture," defined as a symbol system, and that other disciplines study other aspects of human *action. *Sociology, for example, studies social behavior. This point of view has been elaborated by Schneider in a number of works (but especially 1975).

This perspective is derived from Talcott Parsons' distinction between the social, cultural and personality systems (1973). Schneider's elaboration of this functionalist framework radically separates sign systems from the *pragmatics of their use and fails to consider the communication dimensions of what he calls "symbolic behavior." As a result, Schneider's influential version of symbolic anthropology is unable to account either for the differing uses to which sign systems can be put or how they are produced by human agents in interaction.

The reason for the difficulty faced by this school is that the practitioners of symbolic anthropology take a position that moves their approach away from a true semiotics. It is an implicit assumption of Schneider's symbolic anthropology that a distinction can be made between the symbolic and nonsymbolic. This corresponds to the distinction made by Parsons between the cultural and the social systems referred to above. Underlying the symbolic/nonsymbolic distinction is another, more fundamental distinction, that between the expressive and the instrumental. Schneider appears to assume that expressive functions of forms are mutually exclusive. (He fails, as well, to discuss either of these in relationship to aesthetic functions, which have been less neglected in folklore and literary studies). Thus, ritual is examined to discover which symbols are expressed in action and the purposive nature of ritual performance is largely ignored. The recent literature that interprets ritual as a form of "performative *utterances" clearly indicates that the expressive and the instrumental can inhere in the same social form (Ahern 1979).

The second approach to sign systems in anthropology incorporates both structural and pragmatic dimensions of the systems by relating them to the various social *contexts in which they emerge. This approach, found in Geertz's version of cultural analysis (1973), Turner's "comparative symbology" (1975b) or Crick's "semantic anthropology" (1976), is exemplified in Geertz's assessment of the goals of his variety of cultural analysis:

The danger that cultural analysis . . . will lose touch with the hard surfaces of life — with the political, economic, stratificatory realities within which men are everywhere contained — and with the biological and physical necessities on which those surfaces rest, is an ever present one. The only defense against it, and against, thus, turning cultural analysis into a kind of sociological aestheticism, is to train such analysis on such realities and such necessities in the first place. . . . It is thus that I have written about nationalism, about violence, about ethnicity, about human nature, about legitimacy, about revolution, about urbanization, about status, about death, about time, and most of all about particular attempts by particular peoples to place these things in some sort of comprehensible meaningful frame. (1973:30)

Perhaps the most interesting elaboration of the assumptions of this position is Sahlins's *Culture and Practical Reason* (1976). Sahlins attempts an ambitious synthesis of a number of diverse orientations including French structuralism, Marxist thought, the social anthropological interest in ritual, and the traditional American emphasis on culture abstracted from social action. While the ambition of Sahlins's project is sufficient to ensure its failure as a synthesis, he is able to show convincingly that a semiotic perspective that combines a concern for formal aspects of sign systems with attention to the pragmatics of communicative processes in society is the only framework capable of bringing back together the separated strands of contemporary social and cultural anthropology. Sahlins is less successful in his reconstruction of the history of anthropological thought. His mixture of historical materialism, American cultural relativism, and French structuralism simply does not work. Yet his study stands as a lively example of some of the best semiotic thinking in contemporary anthropology.

Sahlins's book provides a link to the structuralist orientation in contemporary anthropology, represented by Lévi-Strauss' pioneering studies of diverse social phenomena from systems of marriage alliance to *culinary codes (Leach 1970). The secondary literature on Lévi-Strauss is now enormous and encompasses a body of works in

anthropology, *philosophy, semiotics, linguistics, sociology and *literature. Perhaps his most enduring contribution has been to show that the forms of everyday life such as dress, cookings, and *kinship can be analyzed to discover underlying structures that can be exposed through the use of semiotic methodology. His greatest fault has been a tendency to treat language as a privileged semiotic system and to fail to recognize that his variety of structuralism works best when language is treated as one semiotic system among others rather than as a governing semiotic system in all forms of communication (Crick 1976). One of the most interesting developments in structuralist analysis has been to situate structures in *history, and to examine different codes as instruments of purposive behavior and, hence, subject to manipulation and change (DeHeusch 1981). Once again we see that the most interesting research in anthropology moves in the direction of combining formal analysis with an interest in pragmatics.

Lévi-Strauss' variety of structuralism draws its inspiration from the French sociological tradition of Durkheim and his students. A central concern of this school has been with what Durkheim's successor, Mauss, called "total social facts." The analysis of total phenomena and collective representations is one of the areas of overlap between anthropology and semiotics where more fruitful dialogue can be of benefit to both disciplines. Mauss' analysis of a total social phenomena is best exemplified in this *The Gift* (1954) where he analyzes presentations and reciprocity as a means of both integrating a social whole and forming a symbolic structure that provides an idiom for social interaction. The study of symbolic structures in interaction is essentially a semiotic problem since, in the view of those influenced by Durkheim and Mauss, structures exist at the level of signification. Beidelman puts the semiotic relevance of Mauss' contribution very well in his discussion of the concept of a total social phenomena:

Such an approach not only makes use of and integrates all the social institutions of a society, but is also envisions the stuff of which society is fashioned, people and objects, as somehow also affecting and modifying social categories and processes, even as they act upon them. This one of Mauss' subtlest and most difficult points. (1970:507)

The relevance of this perspective becomes obvious when one considers the literature on what has been called "symbolic classification," and the recent work on the role of *metaphor in systems of thought (Needham 1973; Sapir and Crocker 1977). These studies show a general tendency for systems of thought to be elaborated in terms of overarching metaphors based on primary strata of experience such as gender identity or laterality, handedness. Thus, many cultures have rituals which express the associations that men are to women as right is to left as inside is to outside as bush is to home as nature is to culture and so on.

The study of systems of symbolic classification and the uses to which they are put raises two issues. The first is that of "natural symbols." In semiotic terms the issue is one of iconicity. Are these naturally motivated signs? Anthropologists have discovered a tendency for certain referents from blood (Turner 1967) to members of the curcubit family to represent the same concepts in cultures unconnected in time and space. Thus, Norman and Haarberg have shown a startling tendency for curcubits to represent fertility in widely disparate literatures (1980) and Lévi-Strauss has recently argued much the same for members of the bean family (1980). This is far removed from the usual panoply of phallic symbols so frequently found in most cultures (Leach 1958). The argument can be made that certain signs are natural "because they make an impress upon the

mind" (Needham 1967). A difficulty with this argument is that candidates for inclusion in the list of natural symbols seem unending and inexhaustible. The problem of naturally motivated signs is complex because of the dialectic of their constitution. They *seem* to be "natural" because nature has already been constituted through the medium of culture. Independent evidence that lions are brave in nature cannot exist, if bravery is to be understood as an emotion of humans that has a volitional quality about it. The bravery of lions is an anthropomorphic association drawn by humans in terms of the lexicon of emotions that they use in evaluating other humans. On the other hand, the bravery of lions is not invented by each and every human. It is a learned association that functions as a collective representation; that is, as part of culture. As a result, lions can become symbols for human bravery even though the very bravery for which they stand has been imposed upon the conception that is held of them rather than arising from their "nature." The relationship is reciprocal. Lions are brave because they are thought to be so and in the constitution of cultural systems they then stand for bravery in an analogical fashion.

The problem is not entirely resolved because the association of natural items with certain association in different cultures is greater than chance would allow. The solution, however, will not be the product of correlational studies that fail to investigate the systems of associations that are brought together in different societies.

This last point touches on the second issue that studies of symbolic classification raise. How are the principles in terms of which symbolic systems are constituted to be understood? If a series of metaphors make the equation between men and women and superiority and inferiority through associations with "inside" and "outside" and "sickness" and "health," as is found in many societies, are we to assume that the society in question consistently places little or negative value on women? This assumption can be held only if we fail to recognize that systems of cosmology and symbolic classification are built up in the performance of ordinary and extraordinary activities and that the metaphors elaborated in one context overlap but do not entirely coincide with metaphoric expression in another context in the same society. This point has been made in a number of ways in social anthropology, but is little appreciated. Turner's studies of ritual symbolism show that the evaluation made by actors of iconic forms varies from context according to the purpose of the ritual (1969). Needham has argued that systems of symbolic classification consist of overlapping sets and that no two metaphoric associations are necessarily made by the members of a society (1973). The most forceful case has recently been made by Bourdieu (1977a). Bourdieu refers to the 'polythetic' quality of systems of symbolic classification as expressing the logic of practice rather than the logic of discursive thought. Such systems are by definition loosely integrated or organized and full of inconsistency and contradiction. In studies of gender Strathern has referred to this phenomenon as "contradictions in gender thinking" (1978), and shown that the very looseness of the system allows both for its manipulation by actors and for definitions to be imposed upon some actors by others. This recent work in the signification process associated with symbolic behavior is beginning to bring aspects of social power into the analysis.

The recognition that systems of symbolic classification are built up in practice brings us to another strand of contemporary anthropology that is of direct relevance to semiotics, the analysis of forms of extraordinary activity such as ritual, play, drama, etc. These contexts have an aesthetic aspect to them that is only beginning to be recognized

by anthropologists and folklorists. Turner's continuing research on the ritual process have gradually moved into the study of other forms of extraordinary behavior (see also Babcock 1978; Kapferer 1979a). Geertz's account of "deep play" as a form of social experience attempts to show that the qualities of experiences differ in situations with different structures. He tends to underplay the degree to which situations are problematic to the actors. In one situation in an African society, beer drinking, Karp has shown that the definition of the situation as a highly formalized context of sociability is often contradicted by the actors' experience of the situation as conflictual. In this instance actors use metacommunicative devices to distance themselves from public definition of the situation (1980). This stance returns to Bateson's interests in metacommunicative devices. A significant difference is that the pragmatics of Bateson have been combined with a more adequate conception of the properties of sign systems. This perspective brings the analysis of social situations closer to developments in semiotics; (see especially the papers in Kapferer 1979a). Social anthropologists are skilled at relating different contexts and situations to one another. A major contribution of anthropology to semiotics can be to show how symbolic forms in one context are related to and transformed by actors in another context. The best recent work in anthropology moves towards a semiotics of social situations. I.K.

Aphasia

Aphasia refers to the disturbance of *language skills, including oral comprehension and expression difficulties, and deficits in reading and writing (Gardner 1975; Goodglass and Geschwind 1976; Hécaen and Albert 1978). In the vast majority of right-handed adults, an aphasia is observed after damage to the left cerebral hemisphere of the brain. Thus, a language disorder in adults with once normal language may follow a stroke (cerebral blood flow insufficiency usually associated with a clot or hemorrhage), a tumor (neoplastic growth which invades or compresses cerebral tissue), a seizure (electrocortical irregularity which disturbs neuronal activity), or trauma (physical insult to cerebral tissue). While it is possible that all language modalities can be compromised after brain damage, a critical feature of the aphasiological syndromes is that a cerebral lesion may interfere only with certain aspects of language (Zurif and Caramazza 1976; Caramazza and Berndt 1978b). Among these isolatable linguistic components are *syntax, *semantics, repetition, and word-finding. The accidents of nature represented by aphasia provide a unique opportunity to study the form of language which the brain honors, and they challenge researchers to account for unexpected dissociations in linguistic skills — such as a patient's inability to read what he has just written.

Scope and Limits of Aphasia

It is important to distinguish at the outset between a primary language disturbance — that is, an aphasia — and a linguistic defect that is secondary to some other impairment. Deaf and/or mute individuals, for instance, clearly suffer from a form of language difficulty in that they cannot hear or cannot express themselves orally. Not only is their deficit not limited to the linguistic domain, however, but these people demonstrate in other ways that they are capable of full, propositionally based *communication. *Sign